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AUTHOR Koch, Karl
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ABSTRACT

A model for integrating second language instruction and business administration education in a college course is proposed. Language instruction is the central element, and area studies (in this example, German area studies) and business studies are bound together by it. The course, in West German industrial relations, would have some German language competence and German history and political science as prerequisites. Students may also have had systematic introduction to personnel management, industrial relations, labor economics, or other relevant areas in previous business courses. The study of industrial relations, particularly from the German viewpoint, can be seen as the study of a system and therefore allows for systematic, cohesive, interdisciplinary examination. Course content would include specialized terminology and in-depth analysis of such topics as the labor movement, trade unions, employers' associations, plant-level industrial relations, government role, collective bargaining, and co-determination. While there is little instructional material available specifically on West Germany, there is much on labor law, trade unions, employers, crafts, labor history, and economics of collective bargaining. This model could be adapted for other language and area studies combinations. (MSE)

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AREA STUDIES AND LANGUAGE TEACHING--A PRACTICAL APPROACH

KARL KOCH

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AREA STUDIES AND LANGUAGE TEACHING - A PRACTICAL APPROACH

Karl Koch

INTRODUCTION

The Treaty of Rome, which marked the birth of the European Economic Community, was the first step towards the frontier-free Europe which is to be implemented with the harmonization of the member states in 1992. The creation of this large market, with its emphasis on providing common regulations and systems in the social, economic, industrial and business sphere, to name just some examples, has already had profound effects on European educational thinking.

As might be expected it has been particularly the business community, with its awareness of an integrated market of around 320 million consumers available to them in 1992, which has provided impulses for innovation and change. A key issue has been the provision within the educational system of the training and qualifications for the future managers within the Member States of the Community.

The concept of 'Business Studies' has played a central role in formulating educational strategies, from the secondary to the tertiary sector, in respect to producing a 'Euro-manager'. The terms 'Business Studies' or 'Management Studies' have no clear definition; they are subjects consisting of a conglomarate of multi- and interdisciplinary subjects which may be combined in many different ways. Thus applied business economics, business or commercial law, marketing, financial management, business policy, information systems, personnel studies and numerous other subjects may all be offered to varying degrees(1).

What is common to those courses which clearly aim at a trans-national objective in the education and training of managers, or managerial skills, is the inclusion of a language component. Britain has seen a noticeable increase in the tertiary and continuing education sectors concerned with providing courses which have an international perspective; central to this approach is an understanding of the institutions, cultures and languages of other countries.

The thrust of the language component has not been exclusively in the direction of acquiring and expanding oral and written skills, but in placing the language skills in a relevant cultural framework. It is this aspect that I wish to explore in this paper, in particular the paper aims at discussing the relationship

between language teaching within the context of the broader aims to which reference has been made; that is the area studies input. To illustrate how these elements, language teaching goals and area studies, might be integrated, a concrete example will be drawn on from German and one aspect of business studies, namely industrial relations.

Let me first clarify what I take to understand by area studies.

AREA STUDIES

From the historical point of view the relationship between the acquisition of language ***skills*** and the totality of the language experience has not always been implicitly recognised; the traditional attitude of a "reading knowledge" for purposes of literary or other studies is a legacy dating back to the genesis of language studies as an academic discipline. However, even at this early stage in the evolution of languages as a field of study the process of osmosis between the language element and the literary element began to erode the rigid demarcation lines and lead towards approaches of, at the very least, a multi-disciplinary nature. The German concept of ***Philologie*** embodies the multi-dimensional endeavour in the field of language study with its reference to the study of literary texts, its wider applicability to the study of culture and civilisation through texts and its roots in the scholarly study of the ancient Greco-Roman civilisations.

The methodological basis of such approaches formed the framework for the study of language and culture which emerged in the nineteenth century in the British world of learning. It is not the purpose, interesting though this would be, to trace the historical line to the establishment of ***Germanistik*** as a discipline, but merely to note that there is such a line. ***Germanistik*** introduced the concept of German culture, in its broadest sense, into the academic sphere and thereby diverged from the literary based study of the German language and included such subjects as, for example, history. The term culture in this context is difficult to define and its semantic definitions are complex but for purposes of this paper Robins definition is useful. -

> "The term is taken from the technical vocabulary of anthropology, wherein it embraces the entire way of life of members of a community in so far as it is conditioned by that membership. It is manifest that in such a conception of culture language is a part thereof, and indeed one of the most important parts, uniquely related to the whole by its symbolic status."(2)

According to this definition it is self-evident why ***culture*** became a central notion for the concept of ***Germanistik*** but, perhaps, we are already looking far ahead, from the nineteenth century, to the contribution of contemporary linguistics.

What does need to be emphasised is that *Germanistik* was very much the response to the socio-cultural constellations of its time; language study as related to the ethos and necessities of the nineteenth century. If this premise is accepted then the origins and nature of ***Landeskunde***, that is the German notion of Area Studies, can be interpreted as partly a demand from the language acquisition side for a contemporary initiative and partly from the deep socio-cultural changes which have occurred since the end of the second world-war. Area studies understood in this way removes the acerbic debate of literature versus area studies; indeed this debate has always misunderstood the dynamism inherent in the pedagogies of language studies. Advanced language skills have always been taught and acquired through presenting the student with a broad, diverse and multi-rooted disciplinary approach. If, and when, some of these strands become cohesive, systematic and analytically manipulative then one can identify a new approach, as, for example, was the case with *Germanistik*.

The impetus towards the development of area studies are to be found in the establishment of the post-war industrial society. Not only was this society rapidly moving away from the pre-war values and structures, but accelerating towards new demands in many and varied economic, political and social spheres; the value, relevance and significance of languages to this society was one aspect. The earlier humanistic tradition, which argued that a country's literature provided an analysis of that culture, needed to be expanded and supplemented to incorporate their socio-cultural advances.

It was, therefore, not surprising that the technological universities and polytechnics with their awareness, not only of scientific and technological significance for the societal framework, but also their willingness to be innovative, should be the focal point in Britain for the development of the area studies approach.

Recognizing and understanding that the traditional base of language courses, the literature and culture tradition, had to be extended was, perhaps, the first step in identifying the problem areas. The issue was frequently clouded because many academics regarded the move from literary topics to non-literary topics in terms of students disenchantment with the traditional approach, thus causing a schism between the new and the traditional. The protagonists failed to understand that an evolutionary process was at the root of the dilemma; language, in its broadest sense, was being extended by the societal developments. Literature and language were not in a cul-de-sac but were branching out into wider and newer areas to facilitate the acquisition of contemporary language skills.

The nascent stage of a move towards area studies was marked by experimental mixes of disciplines leading to a variety of multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approaches. Politics, economics, sociology, literature, history and geography were all thrown into the arena and immediately confronted student

and teacher with the problem of how substantive the conceptual and theoretical basis of these subjects could be under such conditions. This was a pertinent and necessary debate and lead as a matter of course to the central question of what role the language teacher should take in these new developments.

The debates, taking place in Britain, the USA, France and Germany, concerning the status and role of area studies, served the useful function of focusing attention on the integrative nature of the problem. What disciplines were used, and in what particular combinations, were, perhaps, left to individual curriculum requirements the only assumption being that:

> "It is a key tenet of area studies that no disciplinary perspective is rejected *a priori* from a course programme. In these problem-centred courses, disciplines are applied selectively, rather than defended vigorously and each can be a prism through which to study some part of the reality of a contemporary national reality and its language"(3).

This illuminates the integrative approach to area studies but does not define what elements each individual approach must possess before it can qualify for the term 'area studies'. There are, in my opinion, a number of criteria which, from the pragmatic point of view, provide useful guidelines:

1. An area studies subject must contain pertinent factual information for the relevant language area. Information which is so selected that it is meaningful for understanding the socio-cultural problems and structures of that area.
2. The factual dimension must be presented in a *systematic* and structured manner; this implies that there must be a progression. An example might be where history forms the base of subsequent courses which lead to an examination of the socio-political features of a language area.
3. Area studies should have the aim of providing an analytical instrument for understanding a particular language area. It enables the student to dissect the complexities, to understand the structures and to integrate himself in the *Zielkultur* of the foreign language he is acquiring.
4. Finally, area studies must be aware of its role as an intimate partner, not just a corollary, for the language teaching element. It deliberately has the task of providing and extending technical registers and embedding its content in the approriate contextual environment of the target language.(4)

There may be disagreement concerning the criteria, but the case for approaching the teaching of languages within the business context, as set out at the beginning of this paper, on the basis of a link between language and the business element is, surely strengthened.

How then should integration between the language and area studies proceed?

INTEGRATION MODEL

I assume that there is general agreement that it is pedagogically desirable to aim at courses where language and area studies are integrated. I would not wish to argue that this is appropriate for every course or at every level of language acquisition but that there are stages, certainly at the tertiary level, where this objective should be a logical conclusion. As has been argued, the term ***'Area Studies'*** can be regarded as one which designates a subject which has a disciplinary genesis: politics, history, economics or industrial relations, for example, and deals with its subject matter in a systematic, as well as an analytical manner and has a defined linguistic aim. Language students are consequently faced with specialised registers; the problems associated with acquiring a specific terminology but set in the relevant 'cultural' framework.

West German Industrial Relations, which I will be discussing, as an area studies contribution should, therefore, be part of a cohesive course structure and not an arbitrarily added option. I would like to emphasise this point: The success of a truly integrated language and Business Studies course depends on whether the individual elements composing a course are defined by a rationale, and ultimately whether or not some fusion is achieved. I am aware that the desired model may not be realised because of constraints, particularly staffing and resources. There is, of course, no ***one*** correct model; again institutions will have a variety of answers to specific design problems and what significance the different components of a course are to be given. I offer one suggestion of an integrated model which might be of interest. Fig. I represents an attempt to demonstrate how the diverse demands from language, area studies and the special subject, ie business studies, may be fused. Central to this model is the language core, regarded as the binding element between area studies and the special subject, in this case business studies.

A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE: WEST GERMAN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

West German Industrial Relations offers a number of cogent reasons for inclusion in German and Business Studies courses. It is, of course, a subject that finds a rightful place after introductory courses on the area studies side and after students have attained a sufficient level of oral and written competence in the German language. A German history course, an introduction to the West

German political system and a course which has dealt with post-war economic development of West Germany are possible pre-requisites.

Depending on the particular mix of the Business Studies course, the Management Science course, the Business Administration course or the International Management Course, students may also have had systematic introductions to personnel management, industrial relations, labour economics or other relevant areas.

The reasons why West German Industrial Relations are so pertinent for students of German and Business Studies are, as indicated, manifold. The obvious one is that it offers an insight and understanding of German industry and commerce which contributes towards an explanation of the West German economic performance in the post-war period. There may be controversy over the magnitude of industrial relations as a factor of national prosperity but there is agreement, from the international industrial conflict statistics, that West Germany has benefited from very low incidence of industrial conflict compared with most European countries.

However, industrial relations also provide the student of German and Business Studies with the opportunity of extending his understanding of the historical factors germane for an analysis of contemporary Germany, the structure, organisation and management of commercial and industrial undertakings and the essence of personnel management.

It, therefore, provides a bridge between the knowledge and expertise acquired from the Business Studies component and the data from the German area studies programme. But over and above this, it is the German language which provides the fabric for this bridge and which allows the students to compare and contrast the *content*, the *substance* and the *concepts* he is required to assimilate.

It also allows broader societal questions to be included, such as for example the West German attitude towards conflict and the efficacy of West German democracy at grass root levels. Thus industrial relations, as a field of study in this context, need not only fulfil a pragmatic purpose, but can be used to extrapolate questions relevant for West German society in general.(5)

A further point is that many German and Business Study courses include a period abroad, frequently this is spent in an industrial or commercial work placement. Project reports, or dissertations, in German often form part of a degree course and the linkage between this and the work placement needs no emphasis. In my own institution, and elsewhere where I have externally examined, industrial relations and management topics related to specific company placements have resulted in first class pieces of work.

COURSE DESIGN: WEST GERMAN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Applying the principles of the area studies criteria discussed earlier a course design for West German industrial relations might operate with the following objectives in mind:

1. A systematic subject approach;
2. The presentation of data;
3. An analytical dimension;
4. Specialist terminology, and the manipulation of the language within the context of the registers of the Area Studies option.

There is, as far as the design of a course for West German Industrial Relations is concerned, a crucial decision to be made. The term industrial relations, translated as *Der Terminus industrielle Beziehungen*, has an alien connotation in the German language and for German Social Scientists. Despite the fact that Ralf Dahrendorf in his work *'Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland'*(6) used the formulation ***'Industrielle Beziehungen'*** in 1965 and the attempt of Walther Müller-Jentsch in his book *'Soziologie der industriellen Beziehungen'*(7), published in 1986, who made a strong case for this term to be used, it is not universally accepted by German Social Scientists; Dahrendorf and Müller-Jentsch were, of course, both influenced by the British School of industrial relationists.

The equivalents of industrial relations in German include: *Arbeitgeber - Arbeitnehmer-Beziehungen, Sozialpartnerschaft, Austauschbeziehungen zwischen Kapital und Arbeit* and even *Arbeitsmarktparteien und Sozialkontrahenten*. Apart from the ideological connotations implied in some of these designations it is difficult to regard any of them in the sense of a German *Wissenschaftsdisziplin'*. Indeed, from the German perspective, *Industrielle Beziehungen* can only be regarded as an umbrella concept for such recognized disciplines as *Arbeitsrechts, Betriebssoziologie, Betriebswirtschaftslehre, Industriesoziologie*, etc.

If, then, industrial relations were to be taught from a predominantly German perspective, it would be of a cross-disciplinary nature as, indeed, is the case in many courses in the United Kingdom. Some of the central contemporary issues, such as unemployment and collective bargaining, become part of an economics course or the important subject of co-determination is included in an analysis of German society, often based on a sociological approach. The other alternatives, from this perspective, is either a thematic or problem-orientated treatment.

It would be my contention that there are cogent reasons for designing an industrial relations course on the basis of the principle that national industrial

relations can be identified as *systems*, and therefore, structured on a systematic and cohesive basis. Firstly, from the students point of view one would move from the familiar, the known, towards new areas, a procedure that, in pedagogic terms, is beneficial for the learning process, particularly when courses are conducted in the target language as it provides a confident basis on which to build.

Secondly, a course can be designed which has an internal logic, a developmental line and progression to which the learner can relate. Thirdly, for the language student wishing to acquire the practical know-how needed for business, industry and commerce many of the most significant concepts in the industrial relations field can only be fully understood in a context which has been systematically evolved. To give one example here, how would one explain the complexities of the phrase: *Allgemeinverbindlichkeitserklärung eines Tarifvertrages*? The possible translation: statement of a collective agreement to be generally binding, provides, at the best, a crude guideline for understanding this formulation. I suggest that where the aim of degree courses is to produce graduates who are to be linguistically ***active*** in the world of commerce and industry as, perhaps, negotiators, exporters and managers, simple translations of such specialised terminologies is not sufficient.

What is required is a full and deeper understanding, set in the proper context and linked to other relevant areas. This can only be achieved through systematic and directed study.

In addition, a course on West German Industrial Relations should address itself to those questions which are specifically generated from a British perspective if the course is taught in Britain. Examples abound: Why are strikes so infrequent? Why are there so many industrial agreements at regional level? Why are there no sectional conflicts in German industry? Why does co-determination play such a central role?

It is not the vague explanations provided by 'cultural' differences that provide answers, but the analysis that can only be found through a methodical approach. Contemporary writings on Germany in general, and industrial relations in particular, are still peppered with explanatory statements on industrial relations issues in terms of 'collective discipline' or 'deep-rooted' authoritarian attitudes in German society. The area studies specialist and the language teacher have the task to demolish these mythologies and replace them with conclusions derived from the systematic approach for which I am arguing.

COURSE CONTENT: WEST GERMAN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The content is partly determined from the systems framework and allows coverage of the subject in detail, a high density of specialist terminology and in-depth analysis. My assumption is based on a combination of lectures and seminars, in German, say, two hours per week, running over two or three academic terms. There is, of course, no rigid rule; one could imagine a perfectly sensible and useful course over one term.

A possible suggested outline might be:-

(a) The German labour movement;
(b) Trade Unions in West Germany;
(c) Trade Union Organisation and Role;
(d) Employers' Associations;
(e) Plant level industrial relations;
(f) Works Councils;
(g) Collective bargaining;
(h) Co-determination.

Such a scheme moves from a historical introduction of the German labour movement, which allows a discussion of the pertinent historical predispositions for the West German system, to the major actors within that system and finally the relationship between them. Co-determination, a specific form of worker participation, with a long historical evolution, occupies a central role as it provides explanations for the remarkable industrial peace which has been such a major feature of the West German industrial relations environment. It also enables students to examine the role of management structure and, finally, poses significant questions concerning industrial and political democracy in West Germany.

Fig. II places the course content into the overall framework of the systems approach and Fig. III demonstrates how collective bargaining, one aspect within the general framework, can be tackled. The sophistication and specialisation of the terminology thus acquired by the student of German becomes self-evident.

COURSE MATERIAL

A very brief statement concerning course material. There is, in fact, very little available in German which elucidates the 'systems' approach. *Muller-Jentsch* and *Wolfgang Streek*(8) go some way towards it.

However, there is a great deal of material concerned with labour law, trade

unions, employers, crafts, labour history, the economics of collective bargaining, etc. A word of caution. Much of this material, particularly on trade unions, is written from a strong ideologically biased base. Providing texts and sources are balanced, this can form an extremely useful starting point for seminar programmes. For instance a discussion on the role of trade unions in the Federal Republic might use: ***Norbert Blum's, Gewerkschaften zwischen Allmacht und Ohnmacht***(9) and ***Walter Breum u.a., Die Gewerkschaften der BRD***(10), the former by the Labour Minister of the FRG and the latter by a Socialist Study Group.

Indeed one of the great advantages, from the point of view of availability of material, is that the major interest groups in the industrial relations arena provide excellent material, ranging from statistics to policy statements; usually this is gratis. It provides invaluable material for the student, as well as, the teacher of German.(11)

CONCLUSIONS

There would, I suspect, be general agreement that industrial relations, management and related fields, are essential for an understanding of West German society. I would favour, as I have indicated, a solution to the methodological and conceptual problems of teaching a course on West German Industrial Relations, in German, within a *'systems'* framework.

For the British student, with his knowledge and background of his indigenous and very ideosyncratic industrial relations systems, the superficial appeal of the highly structured, legalised West German system should be modified to provide a clear and analytical perception.

I would deem the approach which I have outlined to you, a success if students had assimilated the appropriate terminology, and an understanding of West German industrial relations in terms of a highly centralised system which exhibits a complex and sophisticated approach to the resolution of industrial conflicts via cooperative modes of regulation.

The example, which I have described, can be used as a model for many more language and area studies combinations; the essential principle of area studies and language integration has tremendous possibilities and I hope that I succeeded in stimulating interest in its development.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 *See LISTON, D and Reeves, N. 1985. **Business Studies, Language and Overseas Trade**. London: MacDonald and Evans.*

2 *ROBINS, R H. 1965. **General Linguistics, An Introductory Survey,**. London: Longmans. p. 29.*

3 *CHAFER, T and Findlay, P. 1984. **Cracking the Cultural Code** in the Times Higher Educational Supplement.*

4 *Full Discussion of Area Studies in K Koch. (ed) 1988. **Area Studies and Language Teaching**. University of Surrey and Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, Guildford.*

5 *For Discussion of Industrial Relations: K Koch. 1989. **West German Industrial Relations** in K Koch (ed), **West Germany Today**. London: Routledge.*

6 *DAHRENDORF, R. 1966. **Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland**, R Piper. Munchen.*

7 *MULLER-JENTSCH, W. 1986. **Soziologie der Industriellen Beziehungen**. Campus, Frankfurt/New York.*

8 *STREEK, W. 1984. **Industrial Relations in West Germany**. London: Heinemann.*

9 *BLÜM, N. 1980. **Gewerkschaften Zwischen Allmacht und Ohnmacht**. Bonn Aktuell.*

10 *BREUM, W. u a. 1981. **Die Gewerkschaften der BRD**. VSA. Hamburg.*

11 *Figs 1, 2 and 3 and the West German Industrial Relations example were also Presented at 'German and Business Studies' Seminar Series, Goethe Institute, London, 1987-1989.*

PROPOSED MODEL : GERMAN AND BUSINESS STUDIES

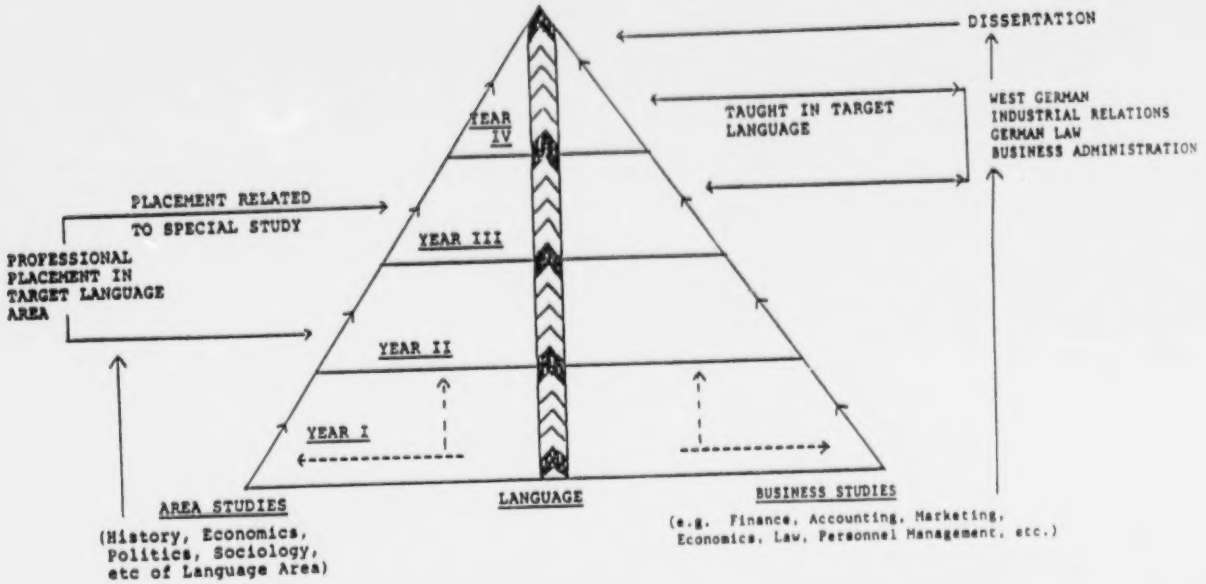

FIG. I.

SYSTEM DER INDUSTRIELLEN BEZIEHUNGEN

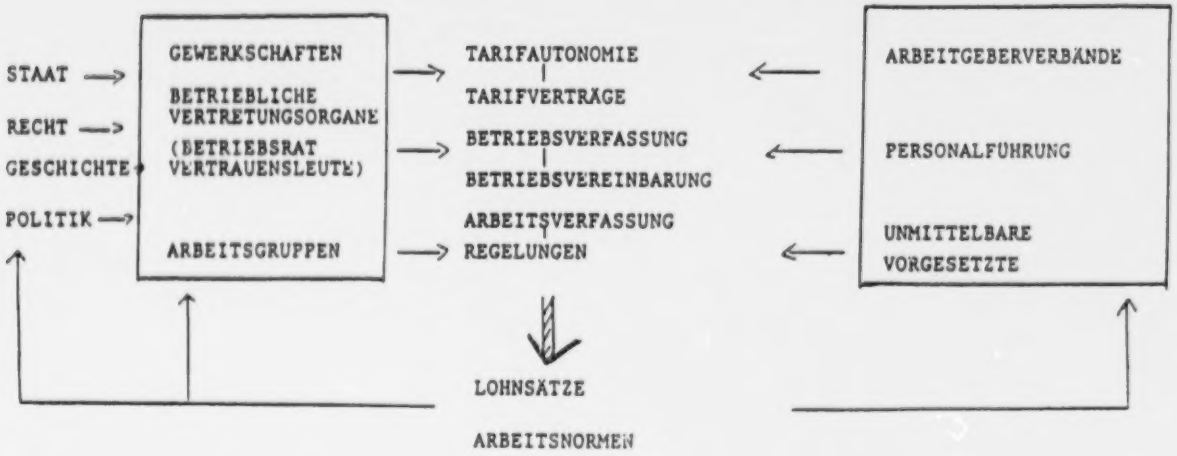

FIG II

TARIFVERHANDLUNG

Tarifvertragsgesetz - 25.9.1969

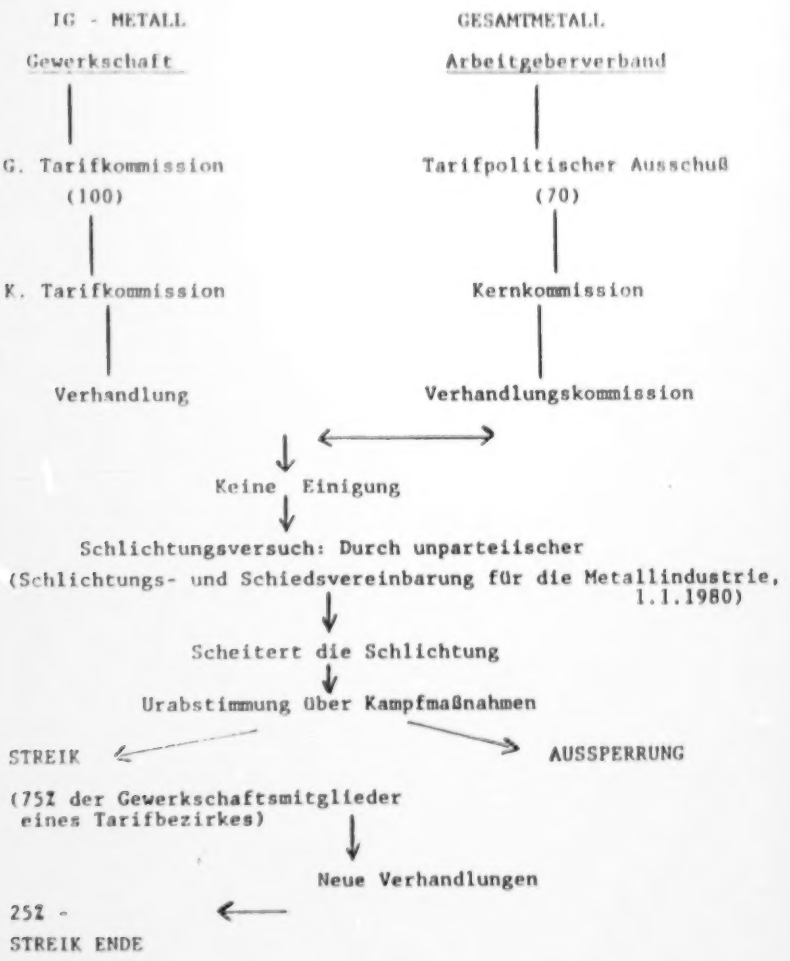

FIG III